Ute Indian Tribe Seeks Senatorial Investigation

Three-Day Meet Considered Many Great Items

The outgrowth of a series of meetings of the Ute Indian tribe that began last Saturday and continued through Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, resulted in calling a senatorial investigation to thoroughly study all problems of the tribe. This major decision was reached in Wednesday's meeting. A lot of other good came from the meetings that will help establish more confidence in the programs now underway and those contemplated.

Presiding over the council meetings has been Richard Henry Curry, member of the Indian agency staff.

According to the minutes of the Saturday meeting, the Indians had complained they have been unable to meet interest payments on money they borrowed to purchase cattle and feed, since the price of livestock had dropped. They moved by motion to eliminate the credit committee of the tribe, and leave the responsibility in the hands of one man. They also voted to cut interest on their loans to 1½% and turn all past Indian money over to the Indian fund.

Another problem considered Saturday was the reclaiming of lands for cultivation. It was reported some 1,187 acres of land has been leveled and prepared for irrigation at a total cost of $337,000. This figure actually represents $294 per acre, when normal farm operating costs were eliminated. A previous report placed the figure at $321.

Employment Problem

As the tribal members went back into session Tuesday, employment and housing became two of the major problems considered. They were insistent that all employees who are not of Indian extraction not be hired, and that members of the tribe be secured to fill all positions. This is a policy that has been followed as nearly as possible in the past.

The tribal members Tuesday were desirous of stopping all housing activities being carried on by the tribe and have all work done by contract. However, Wednesday they reversed themselves and voted to continue with welfare housing and that the tribe handle this program as in the past. They also voted Wednesday to continue with their recreation activities.

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Investigation Necessary

A resolution presented by Francis McKinley, director of community facilities, housing and construction, proposes the 17 million dollars of the Colorado judgments monies obtained in 1950, belongs to the Uncompahgre band of the Ute Indians, at the exclusion of the Uintah band and mixed bloods. This brought a storm of protests from those who would be excluded, thus a decision to call for a senatorial investigation was approved. This study will evaluate all phases of the program and place the responsibility where it belongs.

According to a report from the Tribal office today, of the 17 million awarded the Utes on May 31, 1950, approximately 12½ million still remain as an undivided asset.

This newspaper will try to present a comprehensive study of the whole problem in a succeeding issue of the paper.